

Oh, I know, I'm an unlikely champion of gay rights. I'm a Marine Vietnam vet who has deep regrets about that war—mostly I regret that we didn't kill twice as many of those totalitarian murderers. I hope we do better in Iraq.

I believe the "out-now crowd" are racists who think the Iraqis are too inferior to deserve democracy. Or they don't care, as long as America is defeated and George Bush embarrassed.

I worked hard to defeat John Kerry last November, and will do so again, if he runs.

And I'm a death penalty advocate who thinks we should run it like a barbershop—two chairs, no waiting.

As a member of the Massachusetts Senate, I regularly voted against increasing the state budget more than any other senator.

And don't get me started on guns. I'm not for mandatory concealed carry, but I do think fondly of how polite folks were in the days when gentlemen wore swords.

Living in Madison, I feel a certain kinship with the Israeli ambassador to Baghdad. While I think of myself as a centrist Republican with a libertarian bent, to the average Progressive Dane voter, I'm a fascist pig.

So how did I become a supporter of gay rights?

In 1973, Massachusetts State Rep. Barney Frank had filed bills prohibiting employment and housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

The bills came before a committee on which I served. There were a lot of jokes and nudging going on—this was the early '70s. Appearing to testify was a bright and charming woman, Elaine Nobel, who would later serve as a state representative herself. Elaine convinced me that supporting Barney's bills was the right thing to do. I told the chairman, Sen. Allen McKinnon, to record me in favor of them.

The bills received a favorable report—but no one in the committee's Democratic majority was willing to carry (be floor manager) for them. So, my back up, I volunteered.

The Republican floor leader had a minor stroke when he learned I was carrying gay rights bills. He had only seven Republicans out of 40 senators. I was 27, single and holding a seat I'd won by nine votes out of 60,000 cast. The common wisdom was that I was a one-term wonder who caught the incumbent senator vulnerable but couldn't be re-elected.

I suspect that I may have been the first legislator in the country to speak for gay rights on the floor of a state legislature. McKinnon spoke for the bills after me. On the roll call, only six senators voted in favor—McKinnon, four other Democrats and myself. And the bills were dead that year.

But I won the next election by 10,000 votes, carrying every city and town in my working-class Democratic district. More legislators decided that supporting anti-discrimination was a safe thing to do. Today, it's the law in Massachusetts—which strangely doesn't seem to have collapsed because of it or because of the gay marriage decision there last year.

Trust me, no true heterosexual wakes up and thinks, hey, I'm really angry with my partner. I think I'll try dating someone from my own gender from now on.

So who is destroying traditional marriage in America?

How about men—and increasingly women—abusing their spouses? How about the heterosexual trend toward infidelity, led by the example of our highest elected leaders? How about men fathering and then abandoning children to poverty and state support? How about a large number of straight people deciding serial marriage and divorce is a cool lifestyle?

Doing something about those trends would really protect marriage.

IN HONOR OF RICHARD WALTER

HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Richard Walter on his retirement from more than 36 years of dedicated service to the State of Missouri. Richard Walter distinguished himself in Missouri by his commitment to improving the lives of citizens in this great State.

On December 31, 2005, Richard will retire as District Engineer for MoDOT's District 7. The leadership he provided during his time with the department was crucial to the success of several projects currently moving forward in the 7th Congressional District. Just a few of the projects Richard spent his time advocating include the completion of MO 249, commonly known as the Range Line By-Pass, building four lanes of U.S. Highway 71 south from Joplin to the Missouri-Arkansas border, and completing four lanes of MO Highway 13 north of Springfield to Kansas City. These major projects are vitally important to the economic growth and quality of life in southwest Missouri. The citizens of southwest Missouri owe a great deal of gratitude to Richard for his efforts to advance these projects.

I congratulate Richard on his accomplishments during his tenure with the Missouri Department of Transportation and wish him the best in his retirement.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PATRICIA A. KANE

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a tremendous amount of sadness that I report to the House on the passing of a gentle woman whose strength of character served her community and the Democratic party in my hometown of South Buffalo, NY, with tremendous honor and distinction. More importantly, she was a woman of valor—a wife, mother, and grandmother of extraordinary stature, and someone who will be missed for generations to come.

Born Patricia Ann Doyle, Pat Kane was, simply put, a legendary figure in Democratic politics for decades. Pat and her husband, Donald F. Kane—another legendary figure and mentor to many of my contemporaries—were part of a large extended family that, along with leaders like former county and State Chairman Joe Crangle and families like the Crotlys, Dillons, Keanes, Mahoneys, Whalens and many others, ruled South Buffalo politics from the 1960's to well into the 1990's.

Former House Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill is often quoted as saying that "politics ain't beanbag," and that statement goes double for the rough and tumble world of South Buffalo politics. Pat Kane was a strong leader, who was no shrinking violet; she was an integral player in many important races over the

years, and her absence will be felt for many years to come. Through her gentle example and moral leadership, she made so many of us so much better than we otherwise would have been. She had the guts to say what was on her mind and the integrity to get away with it.

On a more personal level, Pat Kane's graciousness and generosity extended beyond her family to a wide yet close circle of neighbors, classmates, friends and the friends of her six children, of which I was honored to be included. Having attended school with her son, Patrick Timothy, I will always hold the warmest of kind feelings and blessing of happy memories having been a guest in the Kane home many times. Once given, Pat Kane's hospitality and her genuine interest in you could never be forgotten. I am also proud to note that Pat Kane's eldest daughter, Bonnie Kane Lockwood, is a member of my district staff. Bonnie and I have worked together since my initial election to the Buffalo Common Council in 1987, and I am fortunate to have her working with me, because Bonnie possesses both the intellect and the political acumen one would expect from Don and Pat Kane's daughter, and my constituents and I are blessed to have her service on a daily basis.

Pat Kane loved her family, loved her community, and loved the Democratic party, and her influence is seen in the many young women who have become active in local politics over the past several years. I am a better person for having known Pat Kane, and our community is better for her tireless service to it.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, November 26, a cold and snowy morning in South Buffalo, Pat Kane left St. Teresa's Catholic Church on Seneca Street toward her final resting place.

Before doing so, her daughter Bonnie delivered a stirring eulogy that was extraordinary in both its content and its delivery. With the House's consent, I want to close my remarks with Bonnie's words from the Mass of Christian Burial celebrating the life of Patricia Ann Kane.

EULOGY OF PATRICIA A. DOYLE KANE

(By Veronica Bonnie Kane Lockwood)

On behalf of our Dad, Don Kane—and the entire Kane Klan—I want to thank Fr. Paul Seil for celebrating the new life of Patricia Ann Kane this morning and for being with us as that new life began. Our cousin, Fr. Paul has been with us so many times before—weddings, christenings—but his finest moment may have been in Room 8—ICD—8th Floor Mercy Hospital Monday, Nov. 21 at 3 p.m., when, surrounded by her loving family—Fr. Paul stepped to my Mother's side and helped her cross over and help us to accept the cross of missing her—knowing she is with us always.

We also know she is with God and—by now; my guess is God has received his first hand-delivered letter from Mrs. Kane. While I cannot imagine the exact contents of the letter—I am confident a couple of dollars were enclosed.

Thank you to all the Clergy here who celebrate my Mother's life—my Mother was a part of your lives too. And, of course, we thank the Sisters of Mercy for being such an important part of my Mother's life—"Pat Kane lived Mercy, taught Mercy and was Mercy"—and we thank the St. Thomas Aquinas Rosary and Altar Society for providing the honor guard this morning.

Thank you Fr. Mitka for welcoming her and all the Kane's back to St. Teresa's—St.